145 Brattle Street,
Cambridge.

Sept. 17. 1890.

My dear Dr. Merrill:—

I have just found my first opportunity for critically examining your birds which I class as follows:

Parus carolinensis agilis; two specimens which agree closely with examples from Kendall Co. Texas as well as with Bennett's description. The types came from S. Texas from which region I have seen no specimens. Your birds differ from eastern specimens in being ashier above, whiter below, and in having much longer tails.

Icteria virens longicauda; one specimen perfectly typical.

Coniaspus virens " " " "

Chondestes grammica strigata. One " not quite typical but certainly nearer to strigata than to true grammica.

Geothlypis trichas ——? I cannot come to any conclusion whatever about the bird of your hand. It is about intermediate in coloring between trichas and occidentalis, like most of the Mississippi Valley examples, but in size it less than trichas. In fact it is the smallest adult ♂ Geothlypis that I have ever measured.

I start for Lake Umbagog to-morrow and expect to be gone until about Nov. 1st.

Sincerely
William Brewster.

145 Brattle Street,
Cambridge.

Nov. 23rd, 1890

Dear Dr. Merrill:-

Returning from Washington I find your letter of the 17th and the birds. The latter are all Savanna Sparrows and I should say that all except one are typical alaudinus. The exception is, I think, very near Savanna but I have not yet compared either it or the others with my series so this is a "rough" opinion, as the Lawyers say.

I think I have only three specimens of A. bairdii in my collection but I will send you one of them to-morrow for examination so that you may familiarize yourself with the species which once known is easily recognized. I am delighted to get such a fine series of alaudinus as that which you have just sent me for I had very few typical specimens before. And while thanking you let me also congratulate you on the very great improvement which you have made in the art of preparing skins. These are excellent in every way and show that you have the "knack" of wrapping etc nearly to perfection.

We were all of us very sorry not to see you at Washington. The meeting was

very pleasant and interesting with about the usual attendance and more than the usual number of papers. Allen, Elliot, Chapman, Sage, Coues, Ridgway, Stejneger, Merriam, Cory, Goss, Bendire, Fisher, and a good many of the associates were there. Allen resigned the Presidency and Elliot was elected in his place. The other officers elected were as follows: Vice Presidents:- Ridgway and Brewster. Secretary;- Sage, Treasurer;- Dutcher. Editor;- Allen. Members of Council;- Elliot, Ridgway, Sage, and Dutcher ex officio, and Coues, Allen, Merriam, Henshaw, ~~and~~ Goss, Stejneger and Cory.

The Committee on Publication to whom the annual revisions of the Check list are entrusted rejected Melanerpes for. aculeatus Maerus and Otocoris al. insularis Towns. Several others of the recently described forms were "laid on the table" because of lack of material for examination but most of them were passed including Otocoris a. adusta, O.a. merrillii and O. a. pallida.

Have you any Search Owls about Reno? I want very much to see a few from that region.

Yours sincerely

William Brewster

Cambridge, Dec. 5 - 1890

Dear Dr. Merrill:-

Your letter & the birds came to-day.

The Blue Jay seems to me to be cristata although it certainly inclines a little towards florincola in respect to bar and the extent of the white on wings & tail. All my specimens of florincola are very much smaller, however, and have the white still more restricted. The Blue Jays about Charleston are florincola typica. I have never seen any of the Texas birds.

Judging by the feet your Owl must have been just about half-way between nebulosa and alleni. It has too little feathering on the toes for the former & too much for the latter. I have birds similarly feathered from Raleigh, N.C. but those from Charleston, S.C. are true alleni.

I am sorry I misled you with a bogus alaudinus but at the time I sent it I had no idea that the Cala. and eastern birds differed so much.

I have this moment looked up the synonomy of the group and find that alaudinus was described from a California specimen so I doubtless sent you the real thing after all. It follows that these birds you are getting at Reno are not alaudinus at all but doubtless a good and undescribed sub-species for nothing at all like them occurs in California as far as I am aware. But Batchelder, you know, has pre-empted the group & I suppose we cannot trespass on his ground without

at least seeming discourteous although
I shall certainly discuss the matter with
him at the first opportunity and suggest
that he either do something at once or let
others have a chance. Of course your bird is
not really new in the sense of having been
collected for the first time but I have
never before seen a series of specimens from
one place and did not know that they
presented such marked and constant
characteristics. I could doubtless get from
the National Museum enough material to
settle the breeding range etc.

I have written this off hand
without consulting my specimens for
my collection is at present well-nigh
inaccessible owing to some changes
that Denton is making. Accordingly
you must accept the above as
surmise rather than definite conclusion.
I am very sure, however, that there
would be no difficulty in basing a
good sound sub-species on the material
you have sent me. Had alaudinus been
founded on your bird it would have
been much more difficult to have separated
the "alaudinus" of Cala. for this latter is
rather close to beldingi - Sincerely William Brewster

145 Brattle Street,
Cambridge.

Jan. 30, 1891.

Dear Dr. Merrill:-

I have at length found an opportunity to make a careful comparison of the specimens which you last sent me. The four additional Siskins are all agilis, which as far as I can see, differs from carduelis only in the greater length of the wings and tail although there is an average tendency towards a lighter (more ashy) back. You are doubtless right in surmising that agilis is really a western, ~~race~~ instead of merely Texan, form of carduelis. I will report the bird from Indian Ter.

if you prefer to have me do so but I decidedly think the announcement should come from you.

The Tree Sparrows are all ochracea, essentially typical in coloring, but with shorter wings and tail than Colorado specimens.

The Otocoris is leucolaema, not typical but precisely like some Dakota birds referred to leucolaema by Dwight and hence "authoritatively".

The Zonotrichia is leucophrys.

The Spizella seems to me very brightly colored, but my series of this species contained but three males before yours came so I cannot judge the matter very satisfactorily.

Do get me an adult specimen of Bubo kirtlandi

145 Brattle Street.
Cambridge.

if you possibly can; I have only
young - & grey - Tailed - birds in
my small series (three specimens).

I have not touched the Savanna
Sparrows since I last wrote
you but intend to attack them
to-morrow and will let you
know the results if they are
worth mentioning. I suspect
that the synonomy of the
case will prove to be so badly
entangled that it will be
difficult to do anything
without an enormous series
of specimens including types.
However I shall do my best.

For the past month I
have been working about nine

hours a day in my museum
most of the time on Harris's
collections. I had to bring together
a series of about seventy Red-
Tailed Hawks and spend three
whole days studying them
before I could come to any
conclusion respecting the Status
of Buteo b. lucasanus which I
have finally merged with Calurus.
I shall probably have about
twenty hand-colored plates in
the Lower California book. I
wish you could see Ridgway's
originals; they are very fine.

Yours sincerely

William Brewster.

145 Brattle Street,
Cambridge.

18th Feb. 1891.

My dear Dr. Merrill:—

Your birds came this afternoon and although I have as yet only examined them very hastily I must write a few lines to express to you my thanks for so many interesting and valuable specimens.

The pair of Chordeiles

taken in May amongst
me. I have never seen
anything like them,
especially the female
which has so much
rusty about the head.
They evidently represent
the extreme form of
hemyzi but the type
of the latter is nothing
like as rusty.

The Hybrid Finches
are especially interesting
and good examples.
Have you any more
Song Sparrows? The

bright one sent (at
least I noticed only
one) Strikes me as
peculiar — very darkly
& coarsely spotted I
should say.

I will write further
about them birds as
soon as I can get a
chance to examine
them more carefully.

Sincerely
William Brewster

Cambridge -

22nd Feb. 1891.

Dear Dr. Merrill. -

I have found another boy Sparrow which is nearly typical fasciata. Probably the one I examined first was merely an unusually dark individual although it would do no harm to get a few more from Reno. Pray get more Night-hawks if you possibly can. I suppose they represent the extreme form of henryi but if the female you collected is not unusual it might be possible to separate still another subspecies. At all events the Reno birds are exceedingly valuable and interesting.

Your Field Sparrows are

Spirella arenacea Chadbourne.
a form which is still rare
and most desirable. I
had only one specimen
before yours came.

I have not had time
to look at anything else
at all carefully but will
try to go through the
whole collection soon.

You are very kind to offer
to let me go over them
birds in connection with
your proposed paper and
I shall be glad to do
it.

Yours truly
William Brewster.